Neighborhood Networks

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Neighborhood Networks

Engaging Adults in Literacy Programs at Neighborhood Networks Centers

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The guides in this series offer information on starting a center, creating programs and identifying center partners, marketing and media outreach, sustainability, funding, and much more. These updated guides feature new contacts, resources, case studies, and helpful information.

Neighborhood Networks is a community-based initiative established by HUD in 1995. Since then, centers have opened throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. These community learning centers provide residents of HUD insured and assisted properties with programs, activities, and training that promote economic self-sufficiency.

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To receive copies of this publication or any others in the series, contact:

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All publications are available from the Neighborhood Networks Web site at www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org.

Copies of this TA guide are available in Spanish and can be requested from the Neighborhood Networks toll-free Information Center at (888) 312–2743.

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Engaging Adults in Literacy Programs at Neighborhood Networks Centers

Introduction

A lack of basic reading, writing, information, and computer technology skills can inhibit people from reaching their personal and career goals, making financial self-sufficiency almost impossible.

Fortunately, there are tools and methods that can successfully help adults gain these basic skills. This publication is designed to help Neighborhood Networks centers create programs that meet the literacy goals of adult learners.

Chapter 1 highlights the special characteristics of adult learners—the challenges they face and what motivates them to acquire and strengthen their basic skills.

Chapter 2 explores how to get started and choose the best methods and learning tools for your center's adult literacy program, including the use of educational software.

Chapter 3 offers links to resources that can aid in setting up adult literacy programs.

The appendixes provide special checklists and tools to help identify and serve adults who are learning to read.

Chapter 1: About Adult Learners

Teaching adults is different from teaching children. The learning process must consider issues specific to adult learners such as time, motivation, self-esteem, life experiences, practice, involvement, and confidentiality.

Time. Family responsibilities and work obligations limit the time adults have to spend on educational pursuits. Engaging adult learners in activities in which they can see visible gains in their skills will encourage continued participation.

Motivation. Adults engage in learning experiences that they perceive are important, such as those that will help them become better parents or find better jobs. Adult learning facilitators must determine what factors motivate each adult to seek learning and design a work plan with him or her around those motivations. The more learning is linked to life goals, the more willing the adult will be to commit to long-term participation.

Self-esteem. Adults can feel vulnerable in unfamiliar learning environments. Many have had negative classroom experiences that make them especially cautious about entering a learning setting. The facilitator can reduce an adult learner's anxiety by using an informal but respectful teaching approach. Assure all adult learners that asking questions is encouraged and introduce them ahead of time to the facilitators and other staff who will work with them.

Life experiences. Adults bring their life experiences into new learning situations. A successful facilitator will capitalize on this experience, helping adults recognize what they already know or do well and connecting those skills to the ones they will learn. This will help adult learners integrate and remember new skills and ideas. For example, when teaching adult learners how to use a word processor, be sure to ask them what they know about the typewriter keyboard. Extend that knowledge by showing them several new functions on the computer keyboard. Likewise, when discussing a database, ask the learners how they keep their own addresses organized. If they say they frequently lose addresses, discuss creating a database as a solution. Remember to talk about a database all adults recognize: the phone book.

Practice. Adults need time to practice their new skills. Creating an environment that supports learning includes respecting a learner's need to move at his or her own pace. Some adults may need to practice often to gain proficiency before moving on to the next skill.

Involvement. Adults direct their energies toward the things that are most important to them. Therefore their involvement may fluctuate. Sometimes they may not seem interested or involved in an activity that is important to someone else. Do not force them. The facilitator's responsibility is to help adults learn what is important to them.

Confidentiality. This is essential in forging a respectful relationship with adults who need to work on their reading and writing skills. Adult learners must know that staff will respect their need for privacy.

Chapter 2: Getting Started and Finding the Right Methods and Tools

Going the Extra Mile to Attract Adult New Readers

Adult new readers may need special assurances to participate in a center literacy program. They may perceive their lack of basic skills as an insurmountable obstacle to using technology and may be hesitant to enter an environment that is almost certain to reveal their deficiencies. Using community volunteers who are trusted and respected to recruit potential literacy program participants can help these new readers adjust more easily. In addition, these volunteers can act as liaisons between new readers and center staff, helping to identify problems and encourage learning.

Hosting special community events is another way of attracting potential literacy participants to the center. For example, if the center's staff invites a representative from a local daycare facility to discuss childcare issues, give an informal presentation about the center and its adult literacy programs at the end of the discussion and invite the audience to tour the center and "test" the computers.

Identify and Assess Adult New Readers

Adults who need assistance with their reading and writing skills reveal this information at the outset to avoid possible embarrassment. Assure them immediately that this information will be kept confidential, that they will still be able to use the computer technology successfully, and that the facilitator will work with them to set up a comfortable program that meets their special needs and goals and be on hand to respond to their questions.

An informal assessment will help the facilitator develop a work plan and a starting point for each adult new reader. The assessment should be done in a one-on-one interview, asking questions to identify each adult's reading and writing level, goals and needs, interests, and skills.

Skills checklists are useful for making an assessment. Writing and reading skills checklists are included in appendix A of this publication and are designed to determine appropriate definitions based on an informal discussion. The facilitator, however, can vary the questions depending on the learner. In any event, the questioning should not be lengthy or overwhelming.

During the discussion, the facilitator should determine if the adult has vision problems. If so, a larger font size can make a big difference in their learning experience. In fact, adjusting the font size may be the first feature instructors should teach adult learners. It will reinforce the claim that technology is a wonderful tool that will make their learning easier and fun.

Allow for time at the end of the assessment to give prospective participants a brief overview of the center's technology and a tour of the facility. Moreover, give them a chance to type their name and address using a word processor and print it out. This last important step will show learners that they can use computers successfully even without keyboarding skills. Remember that they may need time to locate the letters on the keyboard.

Designing a Work Plan

After completing the informal assessment, the facilitator and adult learners can design meaningful work plans together that reflect their individual goals and needs and make the best use of their time. The checklists in appendix A suggest activities to begin each reading and writing level. Work plans will also vary among centers and individuals.

A 1-hour work plan for beginning readers might include two activities:

- Fifteen minutes devoted to developing mouse skills using a game such as solitaire.

- Forty-five minutes devoted to typing and finishing a language experience story (see appendix B).

A 90-minute work plan for an adult learner at a higher basic reading level might contain the following activities:

- Forty-five minutes spent using a word-processed writing sample to copy and paste text and pictures into a desktop publishing program, which allows users to illustrate the stories they write.

- Fifteen minutes spent practicing typing to increase speed and productivity. Adults will also value this practice time because tracking their speed offers a visible measure of improvement in their skill level.

- Thirty minutes spent playing a computer game for relaxation while developing mouse or problem-solving skills, using a desktop publishing program to make a birthday card, adding a new name and address to a database, or participating in a center discussion on how children and youth can use the Internet safely.

The work plan should offer adults a routine with which they can become familiar and thus take charge of their own learning. In addition, it should develop concrete milestones or short-term goals so learners can track their accomplishments.

The first milestones may include learning how to open and close programs, save and print documents, or indent paragraphs when writing a letter. When goals are broken down this way, adults can experience achievements in almost every lesson.

Monitor as much of the hands-on activity as possible, invite questions, and make suggestions. These actions create opportunities to steer the adults toward new levels of understanding.

Prompts can lead adult learners to discover a relevant answer or solution to their work, raising their confidence levels.

Some adults may feel self-conscious if their writing is visible to others. Seat these learners at computers whose monitors face a wall or are hidden from the direct view of others.

Finding the Right Tools

Should adults learn to type before they use a word processor? Although adult learners do not require keyboarding skills to compose text, many adults will want to improve their typing skills because such skills are marketable. Learning the keyboard can be a significant accomplishment. Building practice time on a typing program into the adult learner's work plan from the start may be an option.

Can adult new readers use productivity tools? Adults should begin using productivity tools at the start. Productivity tools include software such as desktop publishing, spreadsheets, databases, and multimedia programs used in combination with word processors to enhance text production and aid in day-to-day office activities. Some tools, however, are easier to use than others. For example, office software such as Microsoft Word can overwhelm the new reader with all of its drop-down lists; dialog box options; and tab, text, and check boxes. Try to select an easier tool, such as a home office suite. This all-in-one productivity software is easier to learn because the word processor, database, spreadsheet, and drawing tool all share the same simple commands and procedures, and menu and toolbars are less cluttered and provide fewer options. These programs offer the same basic functions and are organized in the same fashion as the more popular, high-powered office software. Adult learners can start on them right away and then transfer to the more complex office tools later.

Each adult's work plan should include working with a word processor, database, or spreadsheet. Although the adult learner can begin with any of these tools, most people start with the word

processor because of its similarity to the type-writer. As adult learners use these tools, be sure to instill the terminology. Do not say "click up here." Instead, say "click on that dialog box" or "find it on the toolbar." That way, adults become familiar with the terminology they will need to incorporate in technology settings.

Use a Web browser to locate resources for helping adults learn to use productivity tools. Create a bibliography that lists publications containing concrete activities for teaching specific computer skills.

What should a center look for in packaged educational software? Educational software continues to improve. CD-ROM programs that combine sound, graphics, and animation to create a stimulating multimedia learning experience allow adults to practice at their own rate to achieve proficiency.

When choosing packaged software, consider how much CD-ROM technology can do to make learning more enjoyable. Good software offers virtual environments and uses sound, graphics, and animation. Avoid software that is no more than a workbook on a screen. For example, English as a second language (ESL) software should offer multimedia learning aids that include video dialogues, graphic illustrations of common words, phrases and cultural icons, or buttons that provide native pronunciations of core sounds. The content should be grouped in small segments with different vocabulary and pronunciation activities.

With the latest ESL software, the user can listen to native speakers pronouncing words in dialogue scripts. Other features include recording options so learners can compare their diction to the teaching software and speech recognition technology that evaluates responses and provides feedback. When previewing software, check to see if the software adjusts to the user's skill level, provides flexible options for users to work at their own pace, and allows learners to easily check their progress.

Before a program is chosen, make sure adult learners preview and evaluate it along with center decisionmakers. Examine its interactivity. Does it offer learners opportunities to practice and get feedback? Is it fun and absorbing? Note how the information is organized. It should be easy for learners to navigate without help—especially to move backward and forward through the program and to exit. Check the pop-up menus and click on the icons to make sure they work.

Packaged educational software should never be used to the exclusion of productivity tools and the Internet.

Can adult new readers begin using information tools on CD-ROMs? Adults with some reading skills can use tools such as multimedia encyclopedias. These programs can stimulate the imagination and help these adults develop basic information finding and research skills. They also will help adults learn how to navigate in a nonlinear electronic environment. This important skill will be especially useful when they start using the Internet.

Try to show learners the possibilities for interactivity without focusing on the text. For example, CD-ROM encyclopedias offer photographs, sounds, film clips, and animations. Ask adult learners to find a sound clip, picture, or film clip of an important event to watch, listen to, or look at, and then encourage them to write a description. For example, ask learners to write down a topic of interest, such as gardening. Show them how to find the index text box in the encyclopedia program and let them type in the topic themselves. Ask them to find and listen to a speech or article using the CD-ROM audio program and then write about their experience.

An atlas program can also be very useful. Most beginning readers can find a map of their country. Most atlas programs offer charts, graphs, and demographics. Several adults working together on a simple project can easily access this information, comparing populations or literacy rates on a spreadsheet. In so doing, they begin to learn about alphabetizing information, reading information in charts, and the difference between political and topographical maps. In

addition, they can learn how to use the scroll bar, pop-up menus, and dialog boxes.

Is it useful for adults to use games and adventure software? Many new adult learners have the preconceived idea that learning is difficult. They need to discover that learning can be fun. Adults can develop problem-solving and thinking skills while playing games. For example, solitaire offers a great way for new computer users to develop mouse skills. Most adults will readily recognize this game. Spending time during those first sessions learning how to use the computer mouse while playing this game will provide the adult learner with the confidence to tackle the next task.

Using Methods That Lead Toward Self-Sufficiency in Writing

Selecting appropriate tools and the proper learning methods can help adults gain confidence, find their own learning approaches, and become more self-sufficient. As they become confident users of technology, they will require less assistance from the facilitator and center staff.

Writing with word processors. Begin by introducing adults to the function keys they will need, such as the Enter/Return, Shift, space bar, and Backspace keys. Ensure that they know where to locate certain punctuation marks such as the period and question mark and briefly explain the word-wrap feature so they do not use the Enter key at the end of each line. Initially teach skills such as starting a new document, saving and printing text, opening a document, and opening and closing an application tool. This also encourages new readers to recognize words such as file, save, print, print preview, edit, cut, copy, paste, insert, and format. As they learn to write, they are also reading. For this reason, you may want to teach them to find and click on these words in the menu before you show them the shortcuts on the tool bar.

Writing. Explain to adult learners that writing is a process, typically beginning with brainstorming ideas, followed by focusing those ideas and

developing an introductory statement and supporting points, and finally creating a first draft, revising and editing, and proofreading the final copy. Remind them that everyone, not just adult new readers, struggles with evolving texts. However, with features such as the Backspace key, cut and paste, spell check, and track changes, adult learners can learn ways to facilitate the writing process by deleting unwanted text, moving text around without tedious rewriting or retyping, identifying and correcting spelling errors, and comparing versions of their drafts.

Topics adults like to write about. Adult learners should write about topics that are meaningful to them, such as family or personal goals. The facilitator can help them identify topics of interest through brief discussions about their personal goals, their children, and other family members. If they are immigrants, ask them why they chose to immigrate to the United States or what their life was like in their native country.

Using Technology to Develop Reading Skills

The language experience approach. Adult literacy programs are increasingly implementing a method known as the language experience approach. The method was created to develop language experiences for nonreading adults using personal experience (for example, the learner's own dictated words as text). After interviewing adult learners, use a word processor to type in their exact words—just three or four sentences. Ask them to reread the text several times and retype it to help them become familiar with reading and writing. More information about writing instruction can be found in appendix B of this publication. If a word processor includes a synthesized speech feature, learners can listen to text that is highlighted until they can read it through on their own.

Group projects. Adults can enhance their learning and develop teamwork skills by participating in a joint project. In the process, they can develop their reading, writing, information, and technology skills.

For example, adults can create and publish their own anthologies around popular themes, including their families and autobiographical narratives. Recipe books or neighborhood guides are also fun to write. Compiling a database of various books for the home, videos to watch, family TV programs, and designing holiday cards or educational brochures are also useful projects. Chapter 3 includes suggested resources for project-based learning and Web sites.

Using the Internet. Although the Web is a very print-driven medium, it can be made manageable for people with weak reading skills. Try to find Internet sites that offer audio, photographs, or maps so that learners are not overwhelmed with print.

Remember that adults have an important incentive for learning how to use this tool—their children. Focusing lessons around issues of parenting and monitoring use of the Internet will be of high value for adults. Show adults how to keep track of the Web sites their children visit, and help them discover ways to discuss with their children what they are learning on the Internet.

E-mail and keypals—an online tool similar to the predigital concept of pen pals—are great ways for adults to develop writing as a vital communication tool.

Rewarding Progress

Adult learners need to know that they are making progress toward their literacy goals. Several initiatives can clearly communicate this to them.

- Encourage learners to print a copy of their work and take it home with them. Set up folders for them to store copies of their work over time so they can see their progress.

- Attach value to the struggles and failures inherent in the use of unfamiliar tools as much as you do final products. Adult learners will feel safe in their explorations when their accomplishments are acknowledged.

- Celebrate their work by inviting them to post their assignments on a bulletin board or organize an event where participants can share their work among themselves. Also, the facilitator or adult learner can design a certificate that acknowledges attendance, hours spent exploring a program, or milestones reached.

Chapter 3: Resources

Resource Lists

A center can begin its search for adult literacy resources at www.literacyonline.org. This Web site lists organizations that provide information about technology planning, implementation, and education.

The Literacy List at *www.alri.org/literacylist. html* provides a comprehensive, updated list of adult literacy, ESL, and family literacy Web sites.

Organizations

A range of national and regional agencies offer adult literacy resources at their Web sites and links to other useful sites.

The Adult Literacy Media Alliance (ALMA) (*www.tv411.org/about_alma*) helps adults gain basic reading, writing, and math skills. ALMA creates innovative, educationally sound, and entertaining television-based teaching materials and cultivates community networks to support ALMA learners.

The National Center on Adult Literacy's Web site (*ncal.literacy.upenn.edu*) offers various literacy resources that can be accessed by country/region, topic/theme, or by doing a site search.

The National Center for Family Literacy (*www.famlit.org*) is a nonprofit organization supporting family literacy across America through programming, training, research, and information dissemination.

The National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) (*www.nifl.gov*) has a goal of ensuring that all Americans have access to services that can help them gain the basic literacy skills necessary to succeed. Activities include offering LINCS, an Internet gateway to national and international literary resources; improving services to adults

with learning disabilities through Bridges to Practice, a four-volume, research-based guide; promoting adult literacy system reform through Equipped for the Future, a long-term initiative that developed content standards to ensure that every adult can gain the knowledge and skills needed to fulfill responsibilities as workers, parents, and citizens; America's Literacy Directory, an easy-to-use online searchable database; Partnership for Reading, a collaborative effort among NIFL, the U.S. Department of Education, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

System for Adult Basic Education (ABE) Support (*www.sabes.org*) is a Massachusetts-based training and technical assistance initiative for ABE practitioners and programs. Its Web site offers useful information and links to other important educational resources.

The National Education Computing Conference (*www.neccsite.org*) is sponsored by the National Educational Computing Association. It offers hands-on workshops, lectures, interactive sessions, presentations with key industry speakers, and a very large vendor exhibition. Conference participants can develop new technology skills; learn about funding, development, maintenance, and support; learn how to develop strategies that reach target audiences, such as adult literacy students; and discover the latest trends in using the Internet, CD-ROMs, and distance learning.

Florida Educational Technology Conference (*www.fetc.org*) attracts educators nationwide. Teachers, principals, technical personnel, and industry leaders gather to share and discover ways of reaching reluctant learners. This conference also offers a large software vendor exhibit.

Technology, Reading, and Learning Difficulties conference (*www.trld.com*) offers both hands-on workshops and presentations on technology as it applies to learning difficulties.

Featured are ways that multimedia, Web-based instruction, word processors, speech-recognition, and text-reading technologies can enhance instruction. The conference has an adult literacy component offering workshops in motivating reluctant readers and writers. For more information, call Educational Computer Conferences at (888) 594–1249.

International Society for Technology in Education's Web site (*www.iste.org*) includes listings of current Web sites, books, and periodicals that relate to educational technology, including topics such as curriculum development, assessment, funding, and professional development.

Curriculum, Projects, and Lesson Plans

The Public Broadcasting Service's LiteracyLink (*litlink.ket.org*) is funded by the U.S. Department of Education Star Schools Project. It was created to integrate instructional video and online computer technology to help adult learners advance their GED (general equivalency diploma) and workplace skills. The Web site offers professional training and development resources.

The Literacy Assistance Center (*www.lacnyc.org*), a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting and promoting the expansion of quality literacy services in New York, provides Web-based lesson plans and curriculums that reflect various teaching techniques.

Publications and Books

Learning and Leading With Technology, published by the International Society for Technology in Education, features articles by educators and for educators, including classroom teachers, lab teachers, technology coordinators, and teacher educators. It emphasizes practical

ideas about technology and how to use technology in K–12 curriculums, especially when it can make a difference in helping students develop, practice, or play with difficult concepts or creative processes.

Surfing for Substance: A Professional Development Guide to Integrating the World Wide Web Into Adult Literacy Instruction by Emily Hacker is an easy-to-use book packed with ideas to help teachers and facilitators learn how to construct meaningful Web-based instructional activities. It was developed by the Literacy Assistance Center through support from MetTech. To request a copy, call (212) 803–3300 or visit their Web site at *hub1.worlded.org/docs/surfing* to download a copy.

Educational Software: Information and Publishers

New educational software and Web sites are constantly being developed. Several popular computer magazines offer excellent reviews on the best Web sites and CD-ROM software.

The Learning Company's Web site (*www.learningco.com*) offers a variety of educational, gaming, and productivity software for Mac and PC platforms.

Tom Snyder Productions' Web site (*www.teachtsp.com*) offers lesson ideas and links to educational software in various subject areas including science, math, social studies, reading, and language arts along with professional development resources and teacher tools.

Web Sites

A comprehensive listing of virtual museums is available at *www.icom.org/vlmp/world.html.* Click on audio symbols and listen to news reports at *www.cbs.com* and *www.cnn.com.* Cut and paste maps from *www.mapblast.com* into a word processor using the right mouse button.

Appendix A: Skills Checklists

These checklists can be used by facilitators in an informal discussion to determine the approximate skill level of adult new readers and writers. It is not an assessment tool. The facilitator should launch the discussion by asking the adult participant how reading and writing is used in his or her everyday life. The bulleted prompts under each skills checklist can be used to help initiate discussions.

Writing and reading are presented in separate charts because adults are often better readers than writers. They may be comfortable reading news papers but still at the beginning stages of writing.

Writing Skills Checklist

Level 1

The adult learner limits writing to filling in his or her name and address on forms or signing greeting cards.

Beginning Writing Activities

The facilitator should have the adult learner complete the following activities:

- Add one to two sentences to a language experience story.
- Make a greeting card or letterhead.

Level 2

Through conversation, the facilitator has learned that the adult learner uses a limited selection of words to address needs, such as filling out a money order, jotting down items on a shopping list, or keeping information on a calendar.

Beginning Writing Activities

The facilitator should have the adult learner complete the following activities:

- Write short narratives about him- or herself, goals, family members, or important events using a word processor. Then add a graphic or scan a photograph into the document.
- Make a greeting card, calendar, or letter-head.
- Organize vocabulary words into a database.
- Create bulleted and numbered lists.

Level 3

The adult learner can write complete thoughts on paper and is confident enough to participate in written communication with others, including jotting down notes to him- or herself, writing notes to a child's teacher, or writing letters to family members.

Beginning Writing Activities

The facilitator should have the adult learner complete the following activities:

- Write narratives about him- or herself, goals, family members, or important events using a word processor. Then add graphics or scan photographs into the document.
- Make a greeting card, calendar, or letter-head.
- Find a map or photograph on a CD-ROM and add it to a word processing document.
- Use CD-ROM encyclopedias to write a short research paper about an event or hero.
- Send e-mail to a keypal.
- Use an online chat program.

Level 4

The adult learner uses writing to think and communicate and is ready to work on passing an entrance test or improving business writing skills. He or she can complete a job application in a timely fashion, write business letters such as

requests for information or letters of complaint, and keep a journal.

Beginning Writing Activities

The facilitator should have the adult learner complete the following activities:

- Create a business letter using tabs and margins.

- Create a resume using a word processor using font, bullet, and margin features.

- Write narratives about him- or herself, goals, family members, or important events using a word processor, adding graphics or scanning pictures.

- Create a newsletter on a topic of interest such as events at the technology center or a news item.

- Use a spreadsheet to set up a budget.

Reading Skills Checklist

Reading ability is not only determined by what people read but also by how they use reading in their lives.

Level 1

The adult new reader may recognize only a few words, names, and signs, including identifying his or her own name and address on an envelope and reading the names of family members on greeting cards.

Beginning Reading Activities

The facilitator should have the adult learner complete the following activities:

- Create a greeting card.

- Use a word processor to make a list of new words that features center alignment, enlarged font sizes, or the bullets or numbers feature. Have the adult learner print out the list to review at home.

Level 2

The beginning reader often uses reading only to solve immediate information needs, such as using an electronic display to find the airport terminal of an arriving plane by matching up letters from a piece of paper, matching a coupon to a shelf item, or finding a price on a store flier or the amount owed on a utility bill.

Beginning Reading Activities

The facilitator should have the adult learner complete the following activities:

- Use the word processor to practice reading with language experiences.

- Create cards, fliers, and banners.

- Organize names and addresses into a database.

- Use word processor to write, print out, and practice reading language experiences and take the printed assignment home to reread.

Level 3

The adult reader can read simple texts, with varied success, to find information or follow instructions. He or she can read a jury summons, prepared instructions, a menu, and highway signs; interpret train and bus schedules; and use an ATM.

Beginning Reading Activities

The facilitator should have the adult learner complete the following activities:

- Create cards, fliers, and banners. If the adult learner is self-employed, help him or her create business fliers.

- Learn about reading information in a table by organizing names and addresses, a CD collection, books read, or another topic of interest into a database.

- Find Web sites of interest and write about the experience using a word processor.

- Use a word processor to write a recipe and use numbers and bullets to organize it.

- Use the Internet to find a news site that has audio and listen to a story that is also visually displayed on the screen. Then ask the adult learner to write about the experience using a word processor.

- Find a picture of a famous person or map of a place on a CD-ROM program and write about it.

Level 4

The adult learner is comfortable with reading but needs to improve his or her test-taking skills. The adult reads newspapers and mail at home and memos and instructions at work. The adult also reads out loud to children at home.

Beginning Reading Activities

The facilitator should have the adult learner complete the following activities:

- Use the CD-ROM encyclopedias to research information for short reports.

- Find information using the Internet on a favorite hobby or television program or research information on an upcoming examination or available employment opportunities.

- Develop the ability to read and use the menu bars, drop-down menus, and text boxes of productivity tools by creating such applications as a database of personal addresses, a spreadsheet of expenses, or a letter and resume inquiring about a job.

Appendix B: The Language Experience Approach

How to Help Adult Learners Create a Language Experience Story

Facilitators can help adult learners create a language experience story by incorporating the following steps:

1. Take time to learn what interests the adult learner. Language experiences can be launched from any discussion about goals, concerns, family stories, or news events.

2. Have a brief discussion in which the adult learner does most of the talking, then have the learner summarize the discussion.

3. Using a clear, easy-to-read font on any word processor, type the summary using the adult learners' exact words and language patterns.

4. After selecting and enlarging the font size for easy reading, point to each word while reading the text. Then, let the adult learner practice reading the text until he or she can read it through without assistance.

5. Encourage adult learners to read for meaning. If they find it difficult to read a certain word, encourage them to read ahead to the end of the sentence and then go back and try to identify the word.

6. Ask the adult learner to select one or two words to remember from the text. Using the word processor's select and underline functions, highlight these words.

7. If several adults are working together, engage them in an activity in which they must help each other and then copy the text onto their own disks for further reference.

8. Once they have saved the text on their own disks, encourage them to reread it. Have them add sentences to the text or use the selected vocabulary words in new sentences.

9. Remember, always use the adult learners' exact words. Spell them correctly, but do not change the words or their order.

Source: Adapted from an updated version of *The Language Experience Approach: A Tool for Reading Instruction* by Karen Griswold, Literacy Assistance Center, New York.

Appendix C: Guidelines for Writing Instruction

When preparing to introduce adult learners to the writing process, facilitators should remember the following guidelines:

Prewriting. Have participants experiment with ideas and select a topic. Use this time to get to know them and their interests.

Drafting. Have participants write a first draft. Remember that the objective is to get their thoughts on paper. Spelling, sentence structure, and grammar are not important for now. If a participant requests help with mechanics, assure him or her that there will be time later to work on those areas.

Sharing. Have participants read their assignments aloud and respond to the writing after they have finished. Make sure to give feedback that can be used by participants to clarify their writing.

Revising. Based partly on feedback, let participants expand their ideas, clarify meaning, reorganize information, and make changes and additions to their writing. Participants should experience the writing-sharing-revising process several times to better develop their skills.

Editing. Have participants focus on eliminating errors in mechanics and grammar. Encourage them to do as much of their own editing as possible. If grammar is a challenge for them, have them print their work and underline the sentences that are confusing. Then provide assistance as needed.

Publishing. Have participants share their work with other students. Try to keep a bulletin board for posting finished work. Reading the writing of other students may help participants identify topics that are important to them. Hearing feedback on their writing from other students may help them improve as writers.

Neighborhood Networks Information

For more information about Neighborhood Networks, visit the Neighborhood Networks Web site at *www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org* or contact the Neighborhood Networks information center toll-free at (888) 312–2743, or TTY at (800) 483–2209. The Web site contains valuable information for centers, including:

HUD NN Coordinators
Neighborhood Networks coordinators listing.

Center Database
Information about operational centers and those in planning. Neighborhood Networks centers across the U.S. listed geographically by state.

Property Database
Information about Neighborhood Networks properties listed geographically by state.

Resources Database
Information about funding, technical assistance, publications, and Web site resources.

News Database
Articles, press releases, success stories, and grand openings relevant to Neighborhood Networks.

List of Conferences
Calendar of conferences and training events.

List of Resident Associations
List of Neighborhood Networks properties with active resident associations.

Neighborhood Networks Consortia
List of Neighborhood Networks consortia.

Senior Properties
List of senior properties with operational Neighborhood Networks centers.

Online Networking
Talk with Neighborhood Networks staff and stakeholders via online networking.

Publications

- **Fact sheets.** Fact sheets are one-page summaries of various topics relevant to the operations of Neighborhood Networks centers. Fact sheets that are currently available include an overview of the initiative, health information, childcare, transportation, seniors, and community improvements at Neighborhood Networks centers.

- *Network News* (current and past issues). A semiannual newsletter that highlights national achievements for a wide audience, including partners and the public.

- *NNewsline* (current and past issues). A semiannual newsletter that highlights topics of interest to Neighborhood Networks centers and coordinators.